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AUTHOR Carter, Ernestine J.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study reported here was to design a model for the development of a human relations program in selected racially mixed public schools. The following efforts were undertaken: (1) an examination of the literature to obtain the rationale for school desegregation, (2) an identification of a national sample of desegregated school districts and a survey of their human relations programs, (3) an identification and further analysis of the efforts of the most successful and the least successful school districts in the national survey and the reasons and conditions for their success or failure, (4) a survey of the existing conditions and constraints which affect human relations programs in selected racially mixed schools of the pilot school district, (5) an analysis of the data in steps 1-5 in order to develop a model for the human relations program. Two sampling procedures were required. The first drew a national sample of school districts which provided information on what desegregated schools were doing to help their staff adjust to the climate of the racially mixed school. The second identified those schools in the pilot school district, that of Philadelphia, whose programs could be improved by the development of a human relations model. (Author/JM)

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The Development of a Human Relations Model for Racially Mixed Philadelphia Schools

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by

Ernestine J. Carter
The Pennsylvania State University

Since the historic Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. the Board of Education 20 years ago, school districts have spent considerable time, effort, and money trying to plan for the most efficient and economic ways to obtain racial balance.[1] Aid and assistance from both private and public agencies have been given. Many communities, because of the values and attitudes of the residents, have not been able to comply with the law and others have complied only to a minimal extent.

School desegregation has been a slow process, but some changes are being made. However, very little attention is being paid to a concomitant problem involved in school desegregation, i.e., the viability of learning environments that have developed as a result of the desegregation orders.

Efforts to enforce school desegregation have created situations in which many schools have obtained the racial balance mandated by the interpretation of the law in their area as to what is to be considered desegregated, while the affected schools remain de facto segregated by virtue of scheduling practices or policies. In many schools, authorities have either had to devote so much of their attention to the desegregation problem that they have practically neglected what happens to students after desegregation. In others, they have complied with the letter of the law and avoided its spirit.

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Those who support the desegregation movement realize that ours is a multi-cultural/multi-racial society, and that increased technological advancements of communication and transportation increases personal contact of peoples of different backgrounds. Effective desegregation must be accompanied by programs designed to enhance the possibilities of positive interracial relations and high academic performance.

Quality interracial education programs are not easily developed, especially not in those areas where tradition, ignorance, and varying values support continued polarization of the races. The schools cannot solve the problems of society, but if administrators, counselors and teachers of racially mixed schools develop the motivation, attitude and behavior, and are equipped with the tools to help implement positive integrated educational experiences, the goal of better learning outcomes through interracial education and humanism may be accomplished.

Integration extends beyond racial heterogeneity (desegregation) to an explicit focus upon the quality of interaction and attitudes among students and to the technical, academic, and social performance in school.[2] In recent years, many studies have been conducted and articles written on the black/white relationship and the marked effects that can be brought about by certain changes in the social situation between the races.[3] Various studies continue to suggest that the attributes of the other students in school strongly influence a child's achievement. Whether measured improvement in academic achievement is attributable to the process of integration or to improved physical facilities, e.g., plant, textbooks, lab equipment, teacher qualifications, or other factors is beyond the scope of this study. What appears critical for the study is the general view, for whatever reasons, that academic gains are noted.

Urban communities, such as the one used in this study, are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve racial desegregation or integration. Many school administrators are ill-prepared for the problems which the racially mixed learning environment has created for them. Advantage should be taken of those schools that are racially mixed and attempts made to demonstrate that cross-ethnic/cross-cultural learning experiences can produce positive results.

The purpose of this study was to design a model for the development of a human relations program in selected racially mixed public schools. In order to achieve the above aim, the following efforts were undertaken:

1. An examination of the literature to obtain the rationale for school desegregation.
2. An identification of a national sample of desegregated school districts and a survey of their human relations programs.
3. An identification and further analysis of the efforts of the most successful and the least successful school districts in the national survey and the reasons and conditions for their success or failure.
4. A survey of the existing conditions and constraints which affect human relations programs in selected racially mixed schools of the pilot school district.
5. An analysis of the data in 1, 2, 3, and 4 in order to develop a model for the human relations program.

Population and Sample

To execute this study two sampling procedures were required. The first, required the selection of a national sample of school districts

which provided information on what desegregated schools were doing to help their staff adjust to the climate of the racially mixed school. The Office of Education, Equal Educational Opportunities, Division of Program Operations assisted in identifying 187 school districts who had operationalized integration programs. Seventy-one school districts agreed to participate in the survey by completing a questionnaire and forwarding additional relevant information about their program.

The second sampling procedure was used to identify those schools in the pilot school district whose programs could be improved by the development of a human relations model. The School District of Philadelphia served as the pilot district. The racially mixed schools selected were located in the lower northeast section of the city.

This section had a total student enrollment in April, 1973 of 31,452. Forty-six percent were black, 30 percent Spanish-speaking and 34 percent white. It contained 2 senior high school, 1 vocational school, 4 junior high/middle schools, and 26 elementary schools. The majority of the schools in this section have racially mixed student bodies and staff.

The residents group themselves along racial lines, with the black, Spanish-speaking, and white living in distinct separate areas. The average soico-economic level of the residents is very low when compared to the citywide rate.

There is little multi/cultural or multi/racial adult community contact as evidenced by racially mixed audiences at social or cultural events

in the community. Some of the more political or educational gatherings, however, do seem to have a greater heterogeneous mix.

In the schools, the various student groups seem to form groupings along racial lines. The major reasons given are the language barriers of the Spanish-speaking students, and the desire to maintain neighborhood friendship patterns.

Procedures

A sampling plan was made to provide for an adequate representation of school districts which could provide descriptions about their human relations activities and for survey efficiency in estimating population parameters. The school districts were picked in a two-stage process. The first stage provided the national population and the second stage provided a list of successful and unsuccessful districts, drawn from the national population.

The survey instrument was a questionnaire. The first section was constructed to establish general information about the respondents. The second section sought answers to general questions about the school district (student enrollment, community size, demographic pattern). The third section dealt with the desegregation/integration status of the district (desegregation/integration incidents, plans, effectiveness of plans). The fourth section listed eight human relations activities on Cantril type scales to obtain ratings of how pertinent the activities were to the districts' goals. The instrument was pretested by a group of graduate students.

It was recognized that the data often yielded opinions of a situation rather than facts. In this study the opinions were considered

of importance. The reliability of the responses was verified by an analysis with the desegregation centers in that area and through review of the literature.

Information from the questionnaire was tabulated for each question and percentages taken. Comparisons of the information were made for the general population, the successful and unsuccessful school districts and shown in tables. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation measure was conducted on the individual responses to the Cantril scales to determine which activities were intercorrelated.

The successful and unsuccessful school districts were identified by asking a panel of judges who were familiar with integration programs to identify the most successful and the least successful respondents in their program efforts. Twelve districts were identified as successful and 7 districts as unsuccessful. The criteria used were established by the panel and based on their experiences with human relations programs. It focused specifically on the interracial attitudes and behavior that would be expected to improve in the community, classroom and non-classroom situations if the program goals of assisting the school desegregation process were being achieved.

The participants were school administrators and persons associated in some way with human relations programs. Seventy-one school districts responded to form the national sample.

Generalizations About the Results

The analysis plan took account of associating the presence or absence of an activity with the mention of pertinence by the respondents. The analysis of the results of the national survey provided guidelines or parameters for the construction of a human relations model.

Responses to the questions about the status of the district after school desegregation were generally positive perceived changes. Most districts saw effectiveness of programs and race relations as more positive as a result of human relations activities. Changes for the worse were mentioned only in two instances: one regarding the status of race relations, and the other regarding improvement of instruction.

Data illustrated that there were, indeed, significant association among the distribution of human relations efforts tried when specific activities were examined. Each of the eight human relations activities were studied individually with regard to their presence or absence in the school district, and the frequency with which they were mentioned as being pertinent to human relations efforts.

When all factors were considered, for the national population six activities fell into the more pertinent category--in-service training, changes in courses of study, recruiting new staff, balancing racial mix of students, balancing racial mix of staff, and adapting new administrative techniques. Bussing and sensitivity work were the two factors considered least pertinent.

This trend of positive responses seemed to hold when examining the districts according to geographic locations, population, and student enrollment. There was a slight difference, however, when examining the districts by successful and unsuccessful categories or as urban centers.

Bussing was rated extremely low by the unsuccessful districts. However, the successful districts and the urban centers considered bussing pertinent to their goals.

In-service training was considered most pertinent across all levels except the unsuccessful districts who considered it least pertinent.

Recruiting new staff was considered generally pertinent by all districts except the successful group. They considered it least pertinent.

Sensitivity work was considered strong only by the more successful districts. Several other activities were mentioned but with no degree of consistency. One that seemed to play a heavy role consistently in the case analyses was community related activities.

In the case analyses of the successful districts none were without its turmoil; all still experience much educational change as a result of school desegregation.

Taken collectively, on the basis of administrators' answers to the questionnaire, newspaper accounts, and published literature, these successful programs attest to the fact that integration efforts are being attempted, and with some degree of success as evidenced by a decrease in active negative flair-ups in the community as well as increased ethnic/cultural activities within the school.

Although successful districts varied widely in size and geographic location, certain elements in their approach to improving human relations climates emerge as common or nearly so. Although some districts cited as unsuccessful also rated as highly important some of the following, consistency was lacking or else these factors were not held to be high priority items. On the other hand, successful districts generally agreed as to the importance of the following general tasks: long term and continuous involvement in human relations activities, advanced planning, community involvement, massive public relations efforts, extensive staff development programs, curriculum revision, committed professional leadership, resource personnel, balancing racial mix of staff, adapting new

administrative patterns. These tasks were used in constructing the process model of the human relations program (Figure 1).

Planning Assumptions for a Human Relations Model for a Racially Mixed School District

The development of an effective human relations plan for the racially mixed school district began with the recognition of the obstacles and shortcomings that had limited the success of the District's past efforts. The aims of the human relations plan elaborated here are: the integration of Spanish-surnamed, black and white children into the life of the school and community, the integration of all professional and non-professional staff positions in the district, the integration of Spanish-surnamed, black and white parents into the life of the school and community, the improvement of the child's attitude toward himself/herself and his/her motivation for school achievement, and the development of curricular materials and teaching procedures that will enable each child to have pride in his/her ethnic heritage.

In order to construct the human relations program it was necessary to define the tasks and the necessary roles involved. This provided the process model and the role model respectively. These tasks and roles , although defined separately, are interrelated (Figure 2).

The Process Model

There are three major components to the process model: (1) to estimate the need; (2) to develop strategies; and (3) to determine changes that may have to take place. Under each of these major thrusts, on the structure (Figure 1), a detailed number of activities is outlined.

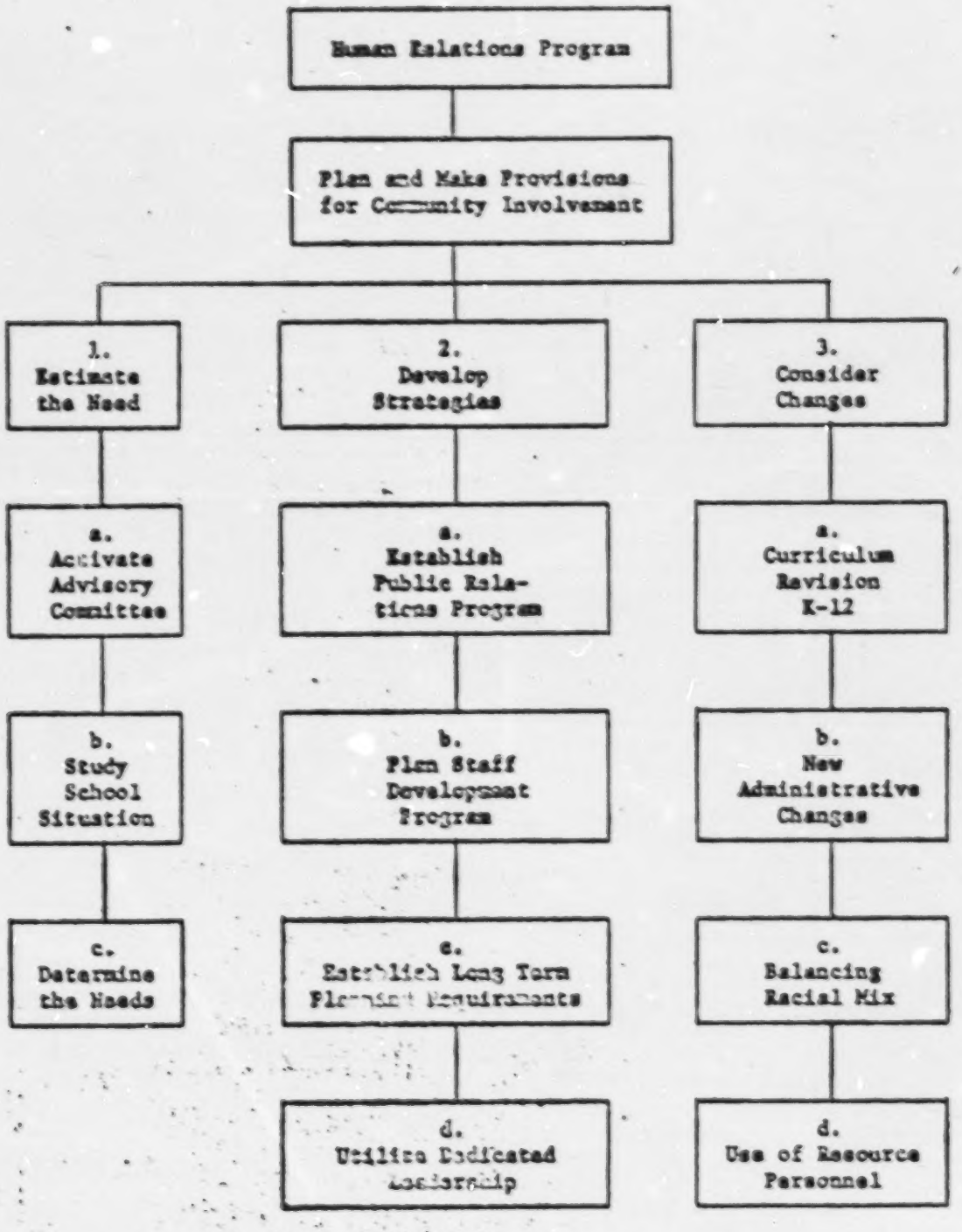
Human Relations Program
Plan and Make Provisions for Community Involvement
1. Estimate the Need
2. Develop Strategies
3. Consider Changes
a. Activate Advisory Committee
a. Establish Public Relations Program
a. Curriculum Revision K-12
b. Study School Situation
b. Plan Staff Development Program
b. New Administrative Changes
c. Determine the Needs
c. Balancing Racial Mix
d. Utilize Dedicated Leadership
d. Use of Resource Personnel

Figure 1. The Process Model

Estimate the Need

The need for involvement in human relations programs must be determined. In the successful districts this was generally done through the cooperative efforts of the school personnel and community resource people. An advisory committee studied the school and community problems and made recommendations. A thorough diagnosis will provide a basis for recognizing and understanding the resources or barriers which may influence a human relations program. A concise, complete, and accurate description of factors which affect the goals of human relations must be prepared. Several survey assessment devices are available to assist the school and community in this diagnosis.[4]

Develop Strategies

Strategies must be developed in order to ensure favorable response of those who will be involved. The strategies engaged in by the successful districts included: long term and continuous involvement in human relations activities, advanced planning, community involvement, massive public relations, extensive staff development, and committed professional leadership.

Consider Changes

Consideration must be given to changes that might occur. Generally, these changes were in the areas of curriculum revision, adapting new administrative patterns, balancing racial mix of staff, and utilizing resource personnel.

A task such as advanced planning, that sets group policy, is best accomplished by using a maximum range of ideas and experiences. Here we see a team effort of community involvement and professional leadership analyzing

problems, interpreting facts, and projecting the general direction of work. This community involvement generally includes resource people from the research department who are able to pool their knowledge with that of the school district. This type of effort adds the dimension of long term and continuous involvement in human relations activities. Even though some of the school districts had only short term experiences in human relations activities in a desegregated setting, they were able to show signs of success. This seems to be attributable to the extensive use of resource personnel as well as a willingness to adapt new administrative patterns. This is in contract to many of the less successful districts who boasted there was no outside help in preparing program plans.

The public should be kept informed about the school district's plans. The successful districts did this through telephone relay services for the public and staff development programs for the the professional and non-professional staffs. These measures were taken to stimulate interest, familiarize others with program objectives, invite participation, and help to alleviate fears. Most of the districts who used such techniques felt it important to have concerned individuals informed by school district personnel at specifically arranged events. Many indicated teachers sometimes shared with other members of the general population the very prejudices, fears, doubts, and ignorance that accompany multi-group interaction.

The Role Model

The role of each member of the school must be viewed in terms of the ten tasks identified in the national survey. The fact that the school is made up of many specialists who work to facilitate the maximum growth of the child is well documented. It is apparent that in order to meet educational objectives, cooperation of personnel must exist. The roles directly involved are: principal, teachers, counselors, students, other administrators, other staff, and community.

The major assumption of the human relations process in education is that a child will make progress toward goals of the program if he is in a school setting, with staff organized and trained to impart information and training with a humanistic approach. The effectiveness of schools in implementing this responsibility is a function of many complex factors. The model to be discussed is but one way to organize the school for cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of a human relations program.

Figure 2 presents a schematic design of the model as it applies when the principal is the main leader in human relations efforts. In addition to the multivaried task of the principalship, the principal is the leadership force in human relations efforts.[5] He must work with other administrators, teachers, counselors, students, and other staff members, realizing that success in human relations requires the working together of the entire staff and the community.

The quality of teaching and counseling is important. The teachers and counselors carry the burden of knowledge transmissions. However, the success of schools in attaining their human relations goals does not depend solely on the characteristics and practices of the schools.

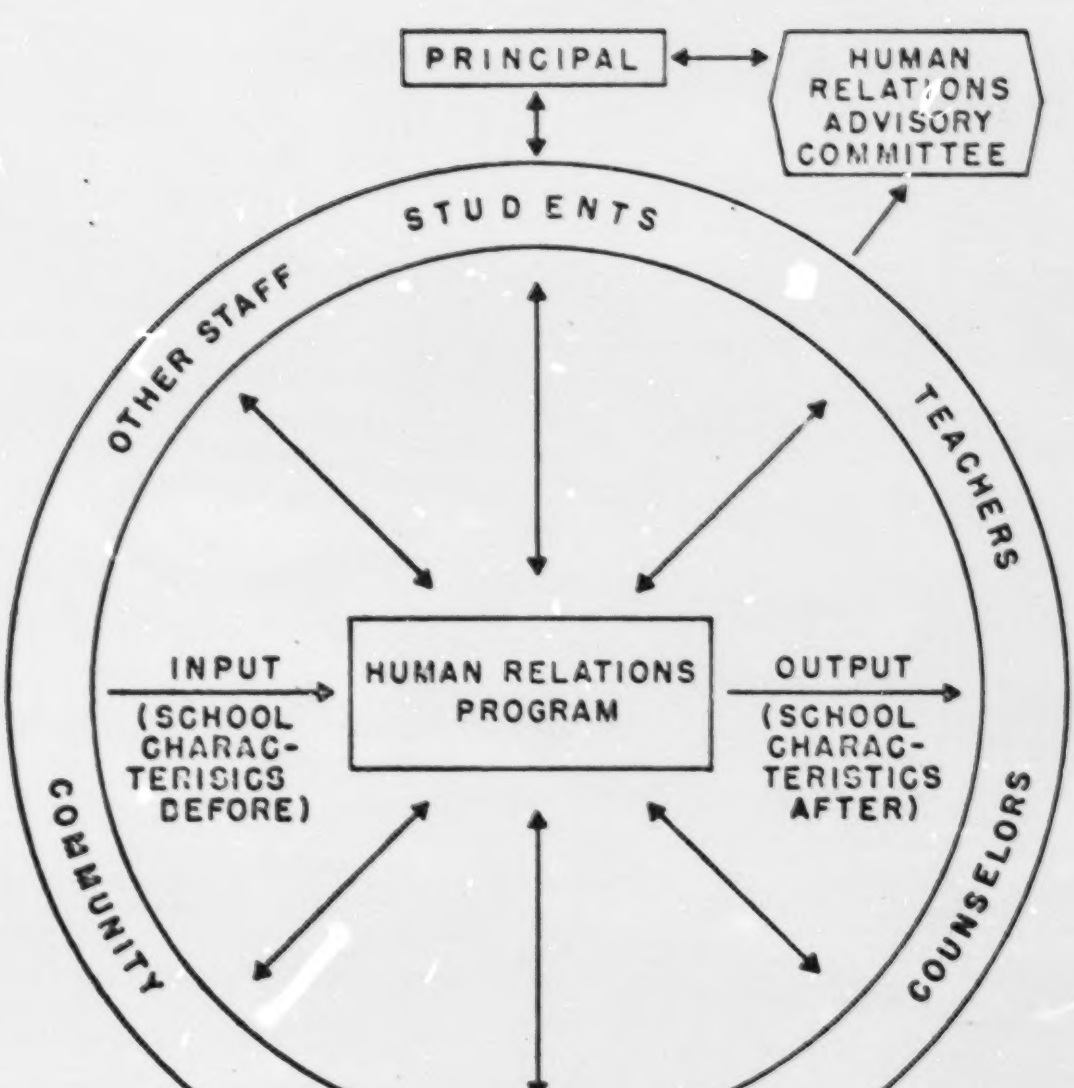

Figure 2. The Role Model

Students bring with them attitudes and characteristics that are reflective of their environment (input). The output of the model consists of the measured characteristics as a result of the program.

The community, which constitutes environment for the school, has an effect upon the school through community leaders and by the influences it has on students, principal, teachers, and other staff members.

The Principal

The principal should openly seek community participation, accept advice, criticism, and approach the community as a resource not as an antagonistic mass to be repressed, subverted, or coopted. He actively participates in the life of the community by attending committee meetings and being active in such a way that keeps the community informed and willing to participate with the school. The schools can no longer act as a closed society.[6] The community must be drawn into the operation of the school because without the support of the environment efforts might be thwarted.

He works actively with the students by being accessible to them, supporting their activities, encouraging intergroup discussions and engaging in conversations with them.

The principal coordinates the efforts of the non-professional staff members such as non-teaching aides, janitorial workers, bus drivers, secretaries and cafeteria workers. He serves as a leader as well as an exemplary figure. Staff development plans are arranged for this group as required.

In an open system (similar to the one proposed in this study) the school and the environment work together in program planning. The principal is the coordinator. The community helps to set goals and

priorities. Their support and encouragement is needed; therefore, they are kept informed, not through messages sent home by students, but through contact with the principal, and invitations by him/her to join the planning team. This kind of approach brings people together who in a normal routine would not have contact with one another, and provides many conditions for learning that the school could not develop by itself.

Rationale for the Constructed Model

It is the contention of the researcher that city wide, even district wide programs in large urban systems, depend ultimately upon the response, commitment and implementation by the smallest organization unit in the educational complex, the local school. For effective human relations programs to "take off," planning involvement of community people, public relations, staff development, curriculum revision, committed professional leadership, resource personnel, and new administrative patterns must be launched, directed and evaluated at the local school level. Thus, the model presented incorporates all of the factors found to be present in successful districts across the nation, as revealed by the survey, and locates at the center or pivotal position the school principal. It is he/she upon whom a greater measure of the success or failure for human relations activities depends.

A list of guiding statements is presented as a philosophical basis for the principal's role in the development of the human relations program. These principles were selected from study of the literature and field investigation. They are:

1. A satisfactory human relations program is one which extends the children's social learning beyond the limitations

imposed by their respective cultural settings and experiences under the creative leadership of the principal.[7]

2. A satisfactory human relations program has as its chief objective prevention: to shape attitudes, thinking, and conduct; to prevent or lessen the formation of prejudices, misconceptions, tensions, and hostilities.

3. A satisfactory human relations program is organized so that there is flexibility in content, methodology, requirements and activities.

4. A satisfactory human relations program requires sensitivity by the principal and other staff of the nature of the human relations program.

Evaluation Measurement

In order to study the effectiveness of the human relations program, an assessment must be made of the impact of the human relations activities. Several aspects of the school situation must be studied, but the major concern must be with those school situations both classroom and non-classroom which develop as a result of desegregation and which were addressed by the human relations activities. Account must be made of the change or lack of change in specific behavior or performance of the participants.

A list of desegregation-related change areas have been developed after examination of past research, the national survey, and discussions with knowledgeable professionals. These areas focus upon interracial behavior of teachers and students within the school setting and in the community. In order for an activity to be considered effective, positive changes in behavior of the participants should be noted after a reasonable period of time (one school year). The areas of change must include:

1. Increase in minority and white student enrollment.

2. Class participation by minority and white students in classes regardless of the race of the teacher.
3. Racial mix of students participating school activities.
4. Formation of interracial friendships and/or relationships.
5. Positive community attitude.
6. Increased parent contacts.

General Conclusions and Summary

The study of literature on school desegregation and human relations, the field study, and the construction of the human relations model have suggested these general conclusions:

1. Human relations programs that provide multi-ethnic knowledge and understanding are more successful if developed on a continuous basis with advanced planning.
2. Human relations programs in multi-racial schools are more effective if the entire staff, students and community share in planning, evaluating, and decision making.
3. The principal of the school should be the leader of the human relations program.
4. A central planning committee in human relations should be the chief instrument for making and executing the human relations program.
5. Most schools with programs deemed as successful had desegregated faculties and student populations.
6. In-service training courses in human relations approaches are essential.

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5. Other tasks of the principalship include supervision of instruction, organization, curriculum development, maintenance of the school plant and pupil control.

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